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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Please cancel claims 1-20 .

Please add new claims 21-40 as follows:

21. (New) A method of ensuring authorized and process-optimized use of semi-finished materials for product production in a production facility, the method comprising the steps of:
- a) reading out calibration data to calibrate the production facility to the semi-finished materials to be processed and reading out data about a predetermined maximum number of products to be produced, represented as a maximum number, from an external storage medium supplied with the semi-finished material;
 - b) calibrating the production facility in accordance with the calibration data of the semi-finished materials supplied;
 - c) programming the production facility to the maximum enabled number of products using best-possible calibration;
 - d) comparing a number of products produced from an authorized starting time, represented as an actual number, to the maximum number; and
 - e) outputting a message when the maximum number is exceeded by the actual number.

22. (New) The method according to claim 21, wherein the actual number determined in the production facility is transmitted to a monitoring and control unit.

23. (New) The method according to claim 22, wherein the maximum number is transmitted to the monitoring and control unit.

24. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein the actual number and the maximum number are encrypted.

25. (New) The method according to claim 24, wherein a transaction number is read in with the maximum number and transmitted to the monitoring and control unit.

26. (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein the TAN of the products to be produced is read out of the external storage medium delivered with the semi-finished material.

27. (New) The method according to claim 21, wherein the calibration data for calibrating the production facility is transmitted to the monitoring and control unit.

28. (New) The method according to claim 21, wherein the monitoring and control unit stops the production facility and begins the production again after a new verified maximum number is read in after the maximum number is exceeded by the actual number.

29. (New) The method according to claim 21, wherein packaging materials for producing packages are used as the semi-finished materials.

30. (New) A device for ensuring authorized and process-optimized use of semi-finished materials for product production in a production facility, wherein the device is comprised of:

a monitoring and control unit for comparing an actual number of products produced from an authorized starting time to a maximum number of products to be produced;

an output device for outputting one of a warning message and a request to input a new maximum number;

a program memory for storing comparison algorithms; and

an input device for inputting the maximum number into one of the program memory and the monitoring and control unit.

31. (New) The device according to claim 30, further comprising a clock generator for determining the actual number.

32. (New) The device according to claim 30, further comprising an encryption unit for encrypting and decrypting programs and data.

33. (New) The device according to claim 30, further comprising a replaceable external storage medium for supplying one of the maximum number and further data.

34. (New) The device according to claim 33, wherein the external storage medium is a card having one of a magnetic strip and memory chip.

35. (New) The device according to claim 33, wherein the external storage medium is one of a diskette and a tape.

36. (New) The device according to claim 33, wherein the external storage medium is an optical disk.

37. (New) The device according to claim 30, further comprising a monitoring unit, wherein the monitoring unit and programs of the monitoring unit are located outside the production facility.

38. (New) The device according to claim 37, wherein the monitoring unit is connected to the monitoring and control unit via a data net.

39. (New) The device according to claim 30, wherein a card reading device is used as an input device.

40. (New) The device according to claim 30, wherein the production facility is a filling facility.